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Man arrested, accused of trying to extort Utah billionaire

By Pat Reavy, KSL | Posted - Apr. 16, 2020 at 4:48 p.m.

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SALT LAKE CITY — A man was arrested Wednesday after police say he tried to extort a wealthy Utah businessman who he said is a billionaire.

Jonathan Howard Robb, 30, who police say is homeless, was arrested by the Utah Attorney General's Office and charged Thursday in 3rd District Court with attempted theft by extortion, a third-degree felony.

The victim was contacted in early April by a "former friend" who knew that the victim is now "a wealthy businessman," according to a police affidavit.

Robb threatened to publicly post information about the businessman that would harm his reputation, the affidavit says. "Robb took active steps to post some of this information on his Instagram page."

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Robb threatened to publicly post information about the businessman that would harm his reputation, the affidavit says. "Robb took active steps to post some of this information on his Instagram page."

Robb posted statements calling the businessman a fraud and also posted, "Who else would like a cold dish of karma?" according to charging documents.

The Instagram posts also included replies between Robb and a woman who was allegedly a mutual friend of the two men.



"The posts show defendant asking the female about possibly embarrassing behavior (the man) had allegedly committed in the past," the charges state.

The businessman sent private messages to Robb through Instagram and told him to "stop harassing him and posting online about him" and threatened to contact legal authorities, according to the charges. Robb allegedly responded that if he did, "the texts come out and I'll let people read it." The defendant also makes other allegations and threatens (him)."

Robb also made other threats about going to the media and statements such as "the reaper is here to collect," the charges state.

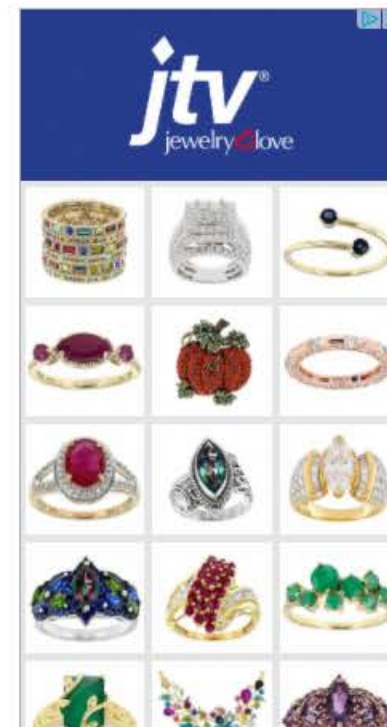
Paid off entire city of Kamas, UT past due utility bills with help of the Mayor discounting the bills 25%! Also paid off all past due bills for both Kamas and Oakley, Utah propane bills (how most heat homes) Huge day. More going out tomorrow to others. Part of \$150k donation pic.twitter.com/lkPnx8qcgl

— Trevor Milton (@nikolatrevor) April 7, 2020

The businessman told investigators that "while the information Robb was threatening to post was not true, even the allegations could damage his reputation and business," according to the police affidavit.

He also said that "he feels threatened for his safety and the safety of his family by some of the bizarre statements made by (Robb)," the charges say.

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was arrested by authorities.

"Upon being taken into custody, Robb uttered that, 'This is what happens when you blackmail a billionaire,'" the affidavit states.

Robb then told investigators he had "dirt" on his former friend "and intended on releasing it to get 'justice.' He stated that he knew the information would damage (the man's) reputation and that he agreed to accept \$500,000 cash to not post the information publicly."

At the time of his arrest, Robb was homeless and had planned on going to Colorado after being paid, according to the affidavit.

In the police document the businessman is only identified by the initials T.M.

On Thursday, Trevor Milton filed for a civil stalking injunction against Robb in Summit County's 3rd District Court. That injunction was denied by a judge later in the day. Milton is the CEO and co-founder of Nikola Motor Co. In September, Forbes magazine estimated Milton's net worth to be at least \$1.1 billion.

A spokeswoman for Nikola said Thursday the company had no comment about Robb's arrest.

Milton relocated Nikola from Salt Lake City to Phoenix in 2018. Earlier this month on Twitter, Milton announced he was selling his dream car and donating \$150,000 to families he doesn't know who don't have the ability to pay for food, car and house payments.

On April 7, he tweeted that he paid off the "entire city of Kamas, UT past due utility bills" after the mayor agreed to discount the bills by 25%. He said he also paid off all past due propane bills for Kamas and Oakley.



Pat Reavy

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